

## Canada's Top Five Women

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The concept of ranking the competitive bowlers of the day is back on the discussion board. Back in 2008 The Canadian 5 Pin Bowlers' Association wanted to do something special to celebrate the one hundredth anniversary of 5 pin bowling. The final plan identifies the top 100 of all time.

In what may be typical Canadian fashion our power brokers of the day decided to not rank the top 100 bowlers, I am not privy to the rationale. Instead each of the ten provinces were invited to submit ten men and ten women for inclusion into Canada's top 100. It was a nice honor to those on the list.

Ironically back in the late 80's early 90's the same association opted to establish a ranking system. The system was in effect for approximately 3 years, and then silently died on someone's cutting table.

Results were passed onto the media. The sport and its top rated players received air time via the TSN and CBC shows of the day. In addition smaller media sites also highlighted the standings.

If a formal ranking system was applied today the top 5 women could easily include the following.

During the 1990's Sandi Horton (Ontario) shared ownership rights to the women's singles crown at the Masters national championships with Dianne Violini (Alberta). The two women evenly split six 1990's singles titles.

Horton has found most of her success in the Masters. Horton's 90's singles was highlighted by back to back performances in 1994 and '95. Proving longevity Horton has also won in 2005. Sprinkle in team gold in 1996 '97, 2000, 01, 08, and 2011 and therein lies a very good argument for Horton at the top of the leader board.

Enter Dianne Violini of Alberta. Violini has won more singles titles than any other woman. Her total currently sits at five split between the Masters and Open championships. The wins span 3 decades beginning with 1988 and ending in 2006. Team success has also added to her heavy medal weight picking up gold in 2002, 2004, and 2012.

Based on Violini's volume of work within singles both Open 2010 and Masters she gets the nod for top spot amongst the women and Horton hot on her heels in second.

Third is a dead heat for the women. The coin toss is between Manitoba's Karen Armstrong, and Ontario's Brenda Walters.

Armstrong has amassed Open singles silver in 2007, 2011 and the heavier gold in 2010. Within the Masters Armstrong has singles titles from 1996 and 2007, pushing her just ahead of Brenda Walters of Ontario.

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Walters gold count is also stunning. Team gold via the Masters has been earned in 1992, 2008, 2010, 2011 and a singles gold in 2003. In the open singles Walters has a 2012 fourth place.

Did I say the Top 5 women. I am going to fudge this a tiny bit. All bowlers with exception to one are currently playing. BUT there is one woman that most definitely deserves consideration. British Columbia's dynamo Louise Paulus. Paulus flourished during the 70's and early 80's, she needs to be on this list. Please scratch into number five B.C.'s very own Louise Paulus! Paulus won two gold Masters singles titles in 1977 and 79 plus she picked up Masters team gold 4 times in a span of six years (1978, 1980, 1981, 1984).

In fairness to Paulus I was unable to retrieve Open records earlier than 2003. It is very possible that Paulus also excelled with the Open national event as well.

Sticking with current players the number five spot would have a bit different look.

Two women, both from Quebec, have both developed impressive resumes. Both have won Singles titles and played on a variety of provincial teams from Quebec. Natalie Trudel won the Open Singles title in 2006 and in 2009 picked up the gold in the Masters singles. Helene Godmaire now hangs 3 singles medals in her trophy case, all from the Open championships. 2004 finishing second, 2005 gold, 2009 – fourth, and 2011 bronze. It truly is a matter of splitting hairs. Split I shall do, I give the nod to Godmaire for the number five spot.

Next week the nationally projected top 5 men will be listed.